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Joint News Release

Joint Public Relations Team

11:30 A.M., December 26, 2010

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Snow storm rapidly covering state

Driving could be treacherous in all areas

The National Weather Service Winter Storm Warning remains in effect until 1 P.M., Monday, Dec. 27. Snow is now falling throughout the state and will become steadily heavier in the afternoon and evening. Accumulation of eight to 12 inches is predicted for Sussex County with the slightly higher accumulations along the coast. The remainder of the state is still expected to receive up to eight to 10 inches.

With snow already falling in all areas, accident reports indicate that road conditions are deteriorating. According to Delaware State Police spokesperson Cpl. Bruce Harris, by 10:30 A.M., Sussex had one personal injury accident, five property damage accidents and one disabled vehicle. State officials urge the public to complete any necessary driving as soon as possible. Visibility will be limited and, coupled with snow accumulation, roads could be treacherous.

The Sussex County Emergency Operations Center reports that staff members are aware of worsening road conditions and they are monitoring the storm and making preparations with other agencies and emergency services.

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DelDOT crews are focusing their efforts on primary and multi-laned roads at this time. Road temperatures in Delaware are below freezing, which means snow will likely accumulate on some of the minor roadways. Increasing wind speeds through the afternoon will also create the possibility of drifting snow covering some roads that have already been cleared.

DelDOT spokesman Jim Westhoff said, "We hope that most people heard news about this storm and did their travelling yesterday. Staying off the roads as much as possible today will make it easier for DelDOT crews to clear the roads, and lessen the possibility of traffic mishaps."

Those who are traveling must give right-of-way to all emergency and road maintenance vehicles. Unnecessary travel that leads to minor accidents or disabled vehicles will impede road crews and possibly delay first responders in reaching locations where they are needed.

Strong winds gusting up to 35 and 40 mph are predicted and can result in near-blizzard conditions, including white-outs and possibly causing damage to power lines. These conditions are expected to be worse from 2 p.m. until 11 p.m. Sunday. High winds also effect driving conditions that will already be hazardous. Along the coast, gusts may be as high as 50 mph.

Snow and winds are expected to taper off after midnight, Sunday night, but light snow might continue into Monday morning. The public is advised to check for closings and cancellations of events before venturing out today or Monday.

Delaware Emergency Management Agency is coordinating communications among local emergency management offices and all relevant state officials and organizations. The public is urged to monitor all weather conditions and follow their household emergency plan to remain safe and to protect property. Whenever possible to do so safely, check on neighbors, family and friends who might need assistance. For tips on emergency planning, see www.dema.delaware.gov, www.delawarecitizencorps.org and www.ready.gov.

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